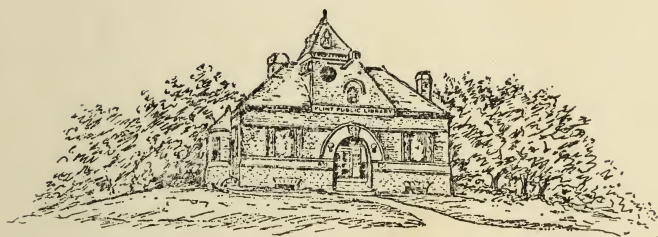


Biography
of
Charles L. Flint
History
of
Flint Public Library



Middleton, Massachusetts



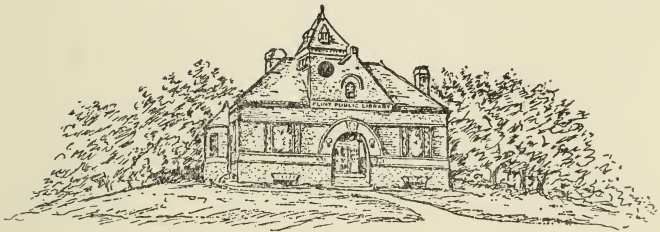
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FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY



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Biography of Charles L. Flint
and
Brief History
of the
Flint Public Library
Town of Middleton
Massachusetts



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William Sanborn, Chairman

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William T. Martin
Thomas J. Oliver

CHARLES L. FLINT (1824-1889)

Charles L. Flint was born in South Middleton on May 8, 1824. He entered Phillips Academy in Andover in 1841 and later worked his way through Harvard College, graduating in 1849. After teaching a short term he spent two years at Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the New York State Bar and began practice in New York City. In 1857 he married Ellen E. Leland of Grafton, Massachusetts and had two sons and a daughter.

While in college, he won a prize offered by the Essex Agricultural Society for an essay on Indian corn, which was published in the 1849 Transactions of the Society. This essay and other agricultural writings attracted state-wide attention and resulted in his appointment as the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture. He took office in 1853 and remained secretary of the Board for twenty-seven years, during which time his annual reports contain a full and accurate record of the agriculture of this state.

Mr. Flint was deeply interested in practical education. He took a conspicuous part in the founding of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was a member of the Boston School Committee and helped in the establishment of High Schools. He was a founder of Massachusetts Agricultural College (chartered in 1862), (now called University of Massachusetts) and served as secretary of the Board of Trustees for twenty-two years. He lectured at the college on dairy farming and upon retirement of President Clark, (1879) Mr. Flint became president of the college, serving one year.

In addition to his extensive articles and reports for the Board of Agriculture, he wrote several books on agriculture. At the time of his death in 1889, he was president of the Massachusetts Agricultural Club and was widely known as an authority on farming. He died in Hillman, Georgia where he had gone to regain his failing health. He is buried in Grafton, Massachusetts.

In February 1879, Mr. Flint proposed a free public library to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Middleton. His offer of \$1,000 and 400 books was readily accepted and six trustees were elected for a term of three years to establish and maintain a free public library. In 1889 under terms of Mr. Flint's will, the town was left the sum of \$10,000 to be expended by library trustees for library purposes. The trustees were then able to purchase a site and erect the present library building, which was dedicated November 11, 1891 and appropriately named after its chief benefactor.

THE FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Very early in the history of Middleton social libraries (so called) were organized by interested citizens. There is evidence that at least two of these social libraries existed, one as early as 1772 founded by Rev. Elias Smith and a later one in 1838 founded by Dr. E. S. Phelps. There is also material evidence in the form of a catalog of the establishment of the Middleton Library Association on March 28, 1865. There were fifty-five shareholders each paying \$3 per share and an assessment of \$1.00 annually. Persons in arrears of two annual assessments were to forfeit their shares to the association. Other rules referred to the care and return of books loaned. Fines were imposed for books overdue and all books were to be returned one week prior to the annual meeting of the association, held the first Wednesday in January. By March 21, 1869, the date of the first catalog, the association had 72 members and a library of 465 books. The officers and directors of the association as listed in the first catalog were:

President — William A. Phelps

Vice President — Milton J. Emerson

Secretary — O. L. Carleton

Librarian and Treasurer — Joseph A. Batchelder

Directors — William M. Peabody, William H. Leslie,
Daniel E. Graves and George F. French

Ten years later, 1879, the first catalog of the Flint Public Library was published and following this ten supplements to the catalog appeared covering the years 1883-1898. These supplements contained lists of books added to the library but contain no other historical data. The catalog was compiled by Mrs. Samuel A. Fletcher and listed 2450 volumes. The trustees for this first free public library were:

William A. Phelps

Joseph A. Batchelder

Ansel P. Tyler

Samuel A. Fletcher (librarian)

James Flint

Gilman A. Kimball

In February of 1879 Honorable Charles L. Flint, then Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, wrote a letter to the Selectmen of Middleton suggesting that notice be taken of the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the town by establishing a Public Town Library, free to all. Mr. Flint offered \$1,000 to help start such a library provided the town would appropriate \$400 for necessary expenses. At the annual town meeting in March 1879 Mr. Flint's proposal was accepted by unanimous vote and the thanks of the town were tendered to him for his generous gift. It was voted: "that the library established by the donation of Honorable Charles L. Flint be called the Flint Public Library as a memorial of our gratitude to him whom Middleton will ever be proud to claim as one of her most distinguished sons."

In addition to his original gift Mr. Flint has contributed more than 400 volumes to the library including a beautifully bound set of his own reports and many other valuable books. The Middleton Library Association presented to the town its own collection of 910 volumes together with the furniture of their library rooms and the unexpended balance in their treasury amounting to \$25.00. Other contributors of valuable books and documents were: Charles O. Whitmore, Esq., of Boston who gave Appleton's Cyclopaedia; Secretary of the Commonwealth for 75 volumes of public documents; Honorable J. J. H. Gregory for 21 volumes of useful miscellaneous works; and to J. H. Devereaux, Esq., for a copy of the History of Essex County.

In 1891, \$10,000 was left to the town under the will of Honorable Charles L. Flint for the purpose of erecting a permanent building for the use of the Flint Public Library. By vote of the town the estate formerly owned by the late Ephriam Fuller was purchased for \$3,500. The buildings thereon were sold for \$174, which sum was added to the \$500 already appropriated by the town for grading the lot. The present library building was completed at a cost of \$9,980 which was just within the sum bequeathed by Mr. Flint for a building. The beautiful stained glass window in the trustees' room was designed by Donald McDonald of Boston and presented to the town by Mrs. Joseph N. Smith of Lynn, in memory of her father Mr. Jesse Fuller who was born in Middleton, March 18, 1803, and died in New York, August 18, 1872. This window is a fine representation of the poem Abou Ben Adem by Leigh Hunt. Mrs. Smith also presented an art square for the trustees' room and curtains for this room and the reading room. A record of the gifts is found in the Town Report of 1900. The window in the reading room, also stained glass, was presented by Mr. J. N. Smith in memory of his wife, Caroline (Fuller) Smith. The clock was placed in the tower through the generosity of Mr. George Fuller. The bronze tablet placed in the recessed porchway of the building bears the following inscription:

Flint Library

Erected from bequest of Charles L. Flint

Trustees

Joseph A. Batchelder

Samuel A. Fletcher

James Flint

Jesse W. Peabody

Ansel P. Tyler

W. Morrill Peabody

Maintenance funds given by Benjamin F. Emerson
and Charles L. Flint

Architects

Loring and Phipps

Builders

Smith and Maney

1891

The building was formerly dedicated November 11, 1891, and the following Saturday the library was opened for the delivery of books. There have been but four librarians since 1879. Mr. Samuel A. Fletcher was librarian from 1879 to

1910; he also served on the Board of Trustees for 22 years. His daughter, Lillian, served from 1910-1916 when another daughter, Edith, served as librarian until 1932. The present librarian, Sarah E. Carleton, was appointed in 1932 after the death of Miss Edith Fletcher. Undoubtedly, the Fletcher family contributed much to the success of the library over a period of more than fifty years.

By the will of Benjamin F. Emerson who died in Boston, April 5, 1887, the library received the interest of \$10,000 after the decease of his mother, Sarah Wilkins Emerson, this sum to be known as the B. F. Emerson Trust Fund. Benjamin Emerson, the son of Stephen and Sarah Emerson, was born in Middleton, December 21, 1837. He received his early education here. Later he attended Oxford and Townsend Academies in Vermont. For fifteen years he was superintendent of a mining company in Copper Falls, Michigan. While giving directions for the extinguishing of a forest fire near the mining property he fell from a coal bridge and fractured his spine. He lived seven months after the fall and died at the Carney Hospital in Boston in 1887.

Thus through the generosity and foresight of these two former citizens of Middleton the town possesses a fine library building and a splendid collection of books. The wisdom of the first trustees in securing land on Middleton Square to erect the splendid brick building did much to beautify the square. The spacious grounds around the building offer an opportunity for further beautification by suitable memorials.

From the foregoing we see that Middleton has always been interested in maintaining a library for its citizens. Since 1879 the library has been free to all residents of the town and since 1891 the books have been housed in a separate building, the present Flint Public Library. The library of 10,000 books including encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases and other valuable references is an asset to the town. The building is open for the loan and return of books on Tuesdays 3-8 P.M., Fridays 6-9 P.M., and Saturdays 3-5 P.M. Besides the stock room for book storage there are two reading rooms, adequate desk space and the librarian's office on the lower

floor. Over the stock room is a balcony which is used for special exhibits during the year. The building is equipped with automatic oil heat and has satisfactory lighting. The trustees' room is furnished with comfortable chairs and special lamps where reading and study can be carried on in quiet surroundings. The trustees invite the new citizen as well as the older residents to make use of the facilities which we are so fortunate to possess.

GEORGE E. GIFFORD

April 1952

FLINT LIBRARY TRUSTEES

1889 — 1952

Year	Name	Number of					Years
1889	Joseph A. Batchelder	-	-	-	-	-	3
1889	Samuel A. Fletcher	-	-	-	-	-	22
1889	James Flint	-	-	-	-	-	5
1889	William A. Phelps	-	-	-	-	-	3
1889	Ansel P. Tyler	-	-	-	-	-	10
1891	Jessie W. Peabody	-	-	-	-	-	5
1893	Darius W. Case	-	-	-	-	-	4
1893	Andrew W. Peabody	-	-	-	-	-	3
1891	F. P. Merriam	-	-	-	-	-	10
1891	M. J. Emerson	-	-	-	-	-	10
1891	M. E. Tyler	-	-	-	-	-	32
1895	H. Herbert Wilkins	-	-	-	-	-	4
1899	George F. Haskell	-	-	-	-	-	1
1899	Galen B. Howe	-	-	-	-	-	24
1899	Ralph G. Peabody	-	-	-	-	-	7
1899	A. G. Huntoon	-	-	-	-	-	2
1900	J. H. Curtis	-	-	-	-	-	2
1903	J. A. Atwood	-	-	-	-	-	4
1908	G. E. Barnaby	-	-	-	-	-	33
1909	H. A. Young	-	-	-	-	-	33
1910	Albert F. Henderson	-	-	-	-	-	1
1911	Charles W. Hutchinson	-	-	-	-	-	20
1914	William R. Godfrey	-	-	-	-	-	26

1930	Leon Soper	-	-	-	-	-	3
1931	Harley M. Tyler	-	-	-	-	-	15
1931	Roger F. Clapp	-	-	-	-	-	9
1933	William H. Sanborn	-	-	-	-	-	19
1939	Austin C. Peabody	-	-	-	-	-	4
1940	J. W. Osborne	-	-	-	-	-	4
1942	A. L. Jones	-	-	-	-	-	7
1943	Paul Wake	-	-	-	-	-	9
1944	William T. Martin	-	-	-	-	-	8
1945	Marion E. Mitchell	-	-	-	-	-	1
1946	Harold Y. Smith	-	-	-	-	-	6
1946	J. Philip Webber	-	-	-	-	-	3
1949	Elmer O. Campbell, Jr.	-	-	-	-	-	3
1949	Carl C. Jones	-	-	-	-	-	3
1952	Thomas Oliver	-	-	-	-	-	3

